



Mystical
Poems
of Rūmī

Translated by
A. J. Arberry

Edited by
Ehsan Yarshater

With a New Foreword by
Franklin D. Lewis

Mystical Poems
of Rumi



Untitled

Sadegh Tabrizi, 100 x 100 cm, ink on parchment

Mystical Poems *of* Rumi

Translated from the Persian by

A. J. Arberry

Annotated and prepared by

Hasan Javadi

Foreword to the new and corrected edition by

Franklin D. Lewis

General Editor,

Ehsan Yarshater

The University of Chicago Press ❧ Chicago & London

The translations in this volume were originally published in two books. The first volume, including the first 200 poems, or ghazals, appeared in 1968 under the title *Mystical Poems of Rūmī 1, First Selection, Poems 1–200*. It was part of a UNESCO Collection of Representative Works and was accepted in the translation series of Persian works jointly sponsored by the Royal Institute of Translation of Teheran and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The second selection, prepared by Hasan Javadi, was published in 1979 by Bibliotheca Persica as number 23 in their Persian Heritage Series, edited by Ehsan Yarshater with the assistance of the Center for Iranian Studies at Columbia University. It was reprinted in 1991 by the University of Chicago Press under the title *The Mystical Poems of Rūmī 2, Second Selection, Poems 201–400*. This combined and corrected edition contains the text and notes from those two books as well as significant revisions based on a new reading of Arberry's original manuscript and some new notes and a new foreword by Franklin D. Lewis.

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Foreword

TO THE NEW AND CORRECTED EDITION

A professorship of Arabic at Cambridge University was established in 1632 and endowed by Thomas Adams, who had made his fortune as a draper and haberdasher, and later went on to become the Lord Mayor of London. As its name implies, the Sir Thomas Adams's Professorship of Arabic was to be devoted to the study of Arabic—it is the oldest endowed professorship for this purpose in the English-speaking world. Several of the professors who occupied the Sir Thomas Adams chair at Cambridge in the twentieth century—E. G. Browne, C. A. Storey, R. A. Nicholson, and A. J. Arberry—were, however, equally or even more renowned as Persianists. Indeed, the latter two especially distinguished themselves as scholars of the Persian mystical poet Maulānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, now known in English simply as Rumi, or in Turkey as Mevlana.

While Edward Granville Browne (1862–1926) was perhaps not as enamored of Rumi (Jalālu'd-Dīn Rūmī, as the scholarly conventions were then spelling his name) as two of his successors to

the Sir Thomas Adams's Professorship of Arabic would be, he nevertheless passed on to his students a deep and abiding love for the poet he described as "without doubt the most eminent Šúfí poet whom Persia has produced, while his mystical *Mathnaví* deserves to rank amongst the great poems of all time."¹ In 1898, Browne's student Reynold Alleyne Nicholson (1868–1945) published a selection of forty-eight of Rumi's Persian ghazals with facing-page translation in English, accompanied by scholarly notes.² Nicholson would later go on to edit and translate Rumi's great narrative poem the *Mašnavi* (also transliterated as *Mathnavī* or *Mathnawī*), a project to which he devoted a large part of his scholarly career. Although attempts had been made to translate parts of Rumi's *Mašnavi* into English before Nicholson did so, his selection from Rumi's *Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz*, or "great Dīvān" (*Dīvān-i kabīr*), was the first work in English devoted to Rumi's ghazals, of which Nicholson remarked, they "reach the utmost heights of which a poetry inspired by vision and rapture is capable."

Arthur J. Arberry (1905–69), the translator of the present work, had attended the funeral of Professor E. G. Browne in 1926 and in 1927 received the scholarship for Cambridge students Browne had established in his will. Arberry used this scholarship to pursue his studies in Persian and Arabic, becoming a student of R. A. Nicholson and obtaining his doctorate at Cambridge in 1936. In 1944, after some time spent in Cairo, A. J. Arberry succeeded Vladimir Minorsky as Chair of Persian at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. Meanwhile, back in Cambridge, C. A. Storey had succeeded Nicholson as Thomas Adams Professor of Arabic.

1. E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia, vol. II: From Firdawsí to Sa'dí* (London: T. Fisher Unwin and New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1906; reissued: Cambridge: The University Press, 1928 and several reprints. Reissued Bethesda, Maryland: Iranbooks, 1997), 515.

2. *Selected Poems from the Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz*, trans. R. A. Nicholson (Cambridge University Press, 1898, reissued in 1952, paperback edition 1977; reissued by Ibex publishers in 2002)

But when Storey retired in 1947, Arberry returned to Cambridge to himself assume the position of his former teacher, Nicholson, and his benefactor, Browne, as Sir Thomas Adams Professor.

Though Arberry did not publish on Rumi while Nicholson was still alive, during his twenty-year career at Cambridge he devoted much of his scholarly efforts to building upon his mentor's project of translation and introduction of Rumi to the West. Arberry's voluminous scholarly output included translations of some poems of Rumi in his *Immortal Rose: An Anthology of Persian Lyrics* (London: Luzac, 1948), verse translations of Rumi's quatrains (*rubā'iyāt*, 1949), his translation of Rumi's lectures and discourses (*Fīhi mā fīh*, 1961), two volumes of prose translations of selected stories from Rumi's *Masnavī* (1961 and 1963), selections from the spiritual diaries of Rumi's father, Bahā' al-Dīn-i Valad (*Ma'ārif*, 1964), and an extended selection of Rumi's mystical lyrics (1968 and, posthumously, 1979). We may also note that during these years Arberry also translated two works tangentially related to Rumi: both the Qur'ān itself, which figures so prominently in Rumi's poetry, as well as the famous modern Persian poem by Muhammad Iqbal, in which Rumi features as a character, guiding Iqbal (just as Virgil guided Dante) through the heavens.³ Beyond all this, Arberry had announced in 1961 a hope to publish a "full study of the life, writings and teachings of Rumi" which was to include an "extended analysis of the contents, pattern and doctrine of the *Masnavi*," which, sadly, he did not live long enough to complete.⁴

3. *The Koran Interpreted*, trans. A. J. Arberry (London: Allen and Unwin; New York: MacMillan, 1955), which has served as a standard source for quotations of the Qur'ān in English. And Muhammad Iqbal, *Jāvid-nāma*, trans. A. J. Arberry (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966).

4. The following chronological capsule summarizes Arberry's great contribution to the study of Rumi:

1949 *The Rubā'iyāt of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī* (London: E. Walker)

1961 *Discourses of Rumi* (London: J. Murray)

1961 *Tales from the Masnavi* (London: Allen and Unwin)

Arberry and Nicholson together thus provided the major portal to the poetry of Rumi for English-language readers. In the decades since their death, many poets and modern interpreters have introduced new contemporary English versions that have popularized Rumi's poetry. Yet many who claim to "translate" Rumi in English do not know Persian at all; their glimpse of Rumi, and the inspiration they receive from him, in fact often relies upon the pages of Nicholson and Arberry, or on English translations of Turkish translations of the Persian of Rumi. Without the scholarly translations of Nicholson and Arberry, it would have been impossible for poets like Robert Bly and Coleman Barks to recognize Rumi's potential appeal and reimagine him as a new-age American poet. Because Nicholson and Arberry were interested primarily in conveying the ideas and expressions of Rumi, their translations may lack the popular and literary appeal of subsequent English retranslations (or re-versions), but they are both more precise and much more informative about the particulars of Rumi's thought than the widely known popular versions.⁵

-
- 1963 *More Tales from the Masnavi* (London: Allen and Unwin)
 1964 *Aspects of Islamic Civilization: As Depicted in the Original Texts* (London: Allen and Unwin) [includes selected translations from the spiritual diary of Rumi's father]
 1968 *Mystical Poems of Rūmī 1* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press)
 1979 *Mystical Poems of Rūmī 2* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press)

5. Other Persian scholars have since published direct translations of Rumi's ghazals from the Persian, including William Chittick in *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi* (Albany: The State University of New York Press, 1983); Talat Halman and Metin And in *Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi and the Whirling Dervishes* (Istanbul: Dost Yayınları, 1983); Annemarie Schimmel in *Look! This is Love* (Boston: Shambala, 1991), and myself in *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000) and *Rumi: Swallowing the Sun* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2008). In German there is J. Christoph Bürgel, *Licht und Reigen: Gedichte aus dem Diwan der größten mystischen Dichters persischer Zunge* (Bern: Herbert Lang and Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1974) and a revised, expanded edition of that, published as *Rumi: Gedichte aus dem Diwan* (Munich: Beck, 2003); and in French, Leili Anvar Chenderoff in *Rûmî* (Paris: Entrelac, 2004).

Indeed, Nicholson's translations of selected poems of the *Dīvān-i Shams* are still in print 110 years later, and Arberry's two volumes of *Mystical Poems of Rumi*, containing four hundred poems from the *Dīvān-i Shams*, continue to inspire popular re-translations (including some by Colin Stuart, Coleman Barks, Kabir Helminski, and Rafiq Abdulla, etc.). The two volumes of Arberry's *Mystical Poems of Rumi* have even been reprinted several times in Iran, presumably so that Persian-speakers can either share their favorite ghazals from Rumi with their non-Persophone friends and relatives, or use Arberry's English as a gloss, where the meaning of the Persian may be not quite transparent to modern Iranians!⁶

It was the summer after my freshman year in college—a little over a year after the revolution in Iran—when I bought my own copy of volume one of A. J. Arberry's *Mystical Poems of Rumi*. As the receipt has remained in my copy, I can be precise: it was purchased on July 18, 1980, at Cody's Books (an influential institution, sadly now defunct) on 2454 Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley, California. It cost only \$3.95, a grand total of \$4.21 after tax: a most rewarding purchase, one that I have frequently had occasion to consult over the three intervening decades.

This translation of 200 of Rumi's ghazals had first been published as *Mystical Poems of Rūmī* in 1968, the year before Arberry's untimely death. It appeared as part of UNESCO's Collection of Representative Works, jointly sponsored by UNESCO and the Royal Institute of Translation in Tehran, and

6. These Iranian reprints of Arberry's *Mystical Poems of Rumi* include one done in Isfahan (Ibrāhīm Sīpāhānī) in 2001; a parallel Persian and English text, *Guzīda-yi ghazalīyāt-i 'irfānī-yi Maulānā: mushtamil bar 400 ghazal hamrah bā tarjama-yi Inḡilīsī* (Tehran: Nashr-i Būta, 2002); and *Kalām-i khāmūsh: guzīda-yi shī'r va naṣr-e Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad bin Muḥammad Maulavī-yi Rūmī* (Tehran: Hermes Publishers, 2004), a project of the International Centre for Dialogue among Civilisations in Tehran in the form of a handy volume with the Persian text of Rumi facing Nicholson's translations of the *Maṣnavī*, and Arberry's translations of *Mystical Poems of Rumi*, the *Rubā'īyāt*, and the *Discourses*.

published by the University of Chicago Press.⁷ It was Professor Ehsan Yarshater of Columbia University who had originally suggested to Arberry in the early 1960s the important project of translating Rumi's ghazals. Arberry began to work on this project, probably in 1964, along with his assistant, Hasan Javadi, then a Lecturer at Cambridge, who had come from Tabriz as a Ph.D. student in 1960. Javadi would visit Arberry at his Cambridge home once a week in 1964–65, during which time they read through Rumi's *Dīvān-i Shams* and discussed Arberry's translations. Arberry would often have a first draft of the poems he wished to translate, which together they would then compare to the very literal Turkish translation of Gölpınarlı. Javadi, a bilingual native speaker of both Azeri Turkish and Persian, would orally translate this for Arberry, who did not work with Turkish. Arberry had at his disposal the Chester Beatty Library manuscript of Rumi's *Dīvān* (one of the earliest and most complete manuscripts, which Arberry had cataloged), which he consulted alongside Badī' al-Zamān Furūzānfar's newly published critical edition of the text.⁸

The corpus of Rumi's ghazals is huge (3229 poems); Arberry culled through them, selecting 400 poems for the variety of their themes, and excluding those he thought would not translate well owing to repetition or other factors. By 1965, the initial translations were nearly complete, and Javadi, now back in Iran, was hired to do annotations to accompany the text. Arberry lived to see the first volume (poems 1–200 in the present collection) through the press, culling an abbreviated selection

7. In that same year, 1968, the Shah of Iran visited the University of Chicago and dedicated the cornerstone for a proposed center of Iranian Studies, to which the Iranian government had pledged generous financial support; unfortunately, this project was not pursued expeditiously, and the Iranian offer was eventually withdrawn. My own copy of *Mystical Poems of Rumi* was actually a paperback reprint issued as a Phoenix Book by the University of Chicago Press in 1974.

8. *Kullīyāt-i Shams, yā Dīvān-i kabīr*, ed. Badī' al-Zamān Furūzānfar, 8 vols. (Tehran: University of Tehran Press, 1957–66.)

of the notes that Javadi had prepared. Arberry had completed work on the translations for the second volume (poems 201–400) before he passed away in the early autumn of 1969, leaving behind a handwritten manuscript of his translations. Arberry had suffered from Parkinson’s disease, which made his small handwriting quite difficult to make out (see the facsimile page of poems 285–87, reproduced here on page 6). These translations were written out in blue ink on both sides of white unruled paper with few corrections, though from time to time a phrase is crossed out and replaced with a different wording, either in the space just above it or in the margins. This is sometimes done in the same blue ink and sometimes, evidently at a later time, in red ink. Arberry included frequent marginal notations about wordplay in Rumi’s Persian, usually indicating this in the margins of his handscript by the word *jimās* in Persian script (جناس). These occurrences of paronomasia are sometimes mentioned in the notes published with Arberry’s translations, and sometimes not. The marginal notes also include occasional notation of places where Arberry preferred the reading of the Chester Beatty manuscript to the reading of Furūzānfar’s critical edition.

Several individuals, including Arberry’s daughter and various of his colleagues, including Javadi, collaborated in the effort to decipher these handwritten translations. Hasan Javadi was commissioned to prepare a typescript for publication, including the addition, as before, of Javadi’s annotations to Arberry’s translations. *Mystical Poems of Rūmī 2* was published eleven years after volume one, and by that time, a revolution in Iran had swept away both the Shah and the Royal Institute of Translation, which institute had sponsored publication. Volume 2 appeared through Bibliotheca Persica with the imprimatur of the Persian Heritage Series, under the general editorship of Ehsan Yarshater.⁹

9. Published as *Mystical Poems of Rūmī. Second Selection, Poems 201–400*. Persian Heritage Series, no. 23 (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1979). It

Over the years, as I consulted Arberry's translations, I had noted some errors, and others who had noticed errors over the years have also kindly provided their lists of corrections to me.¹⁰ These have now been checked and corrected against Arberry's original manuscript, the partial fair copy prepared after Arberry's death, as well as Professor Javadi's typescript,¹¹ and the Persian text of the poems as they appear in Furūzānfar's critical edition. I did not, however, have the Chester Beatty manuscript at my disposal while correcting the text and could not always tell whether Arberry might have been looking at a variant reading not in the Furūzānfar edition.

The present, new edition of *Mystical Poems of Rumi*, then, appears in a corrected and consistent format, closer to what Arberry apparently envisioned. The two separate volumes have been combined into one, standardizing the format, the transliterations, and the notes. Numerous errors of reading (well over a hundred of them, many of them impacting the meaning) have been corrected, some of them resulting from the difficulty of deciphering Arberry's handwriting and others introduced during typesetting or copyediting. The numerals indicating the line numbers in each poem (in intervals of five: 5, 10, 15, etc.), which appear in Arberry's own manuscript and in Professor Javadi's typescript, but which were left out when the second volume was prepared for print, have been restored. The notes, which in volume one had been keyed to the sequential number of the poem in the translation (1–200) and the line number of the relevant poem, but which were signaled instead by sequential footnotes

was reprinted by the University of Chicago Press in 1991. I acquired my copy of this from the Seminary Co-op Bookstore in Chicago in 1992 for \$10.95.

10. I am grateful to Ibrahim Gamard and Susan Friedman for their assistance, but most especially to Steven Johnson, who took great pains to go through all the poems in volume two, collating them to the text of Furūzānfar, and uncovering many other potential errors.

11. I am extremely grateful to Professor Javadi for inviting me to his home to consult Arberry's original handwritten translations, which have remained in his possession since he worked on the manuscript in the 1970s.

in volume two, have been regularized, now all uniformly presented, keyed to the poem number and line number. The original wording of Arberry's translations remains unchanged, except to correct errors in rendering Arberry's intention.¹²

Eight hundred years have now passed since the birth of Rumi in 1207, yet his poems remain vibrant and revelatory to contemporary readers. Indeed, in collaboration with Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Turkey, UNESCO celebrated the anniversary of Rumi's birth at its Paris headquarters in September 2007, quoting from one line in his ghazals ("I do not distinguish between the relative and the stranger") as evidence of his "especially good relations with people of diverse social, cultural, and religious backgrounds."

All English renderings will pale before the sheer beauty and sonorous intensity of Rumi's original Persian. Still, whether in Persian or in English translation, his poems continue to be richly rewarding, revealing more of themselves with each rereading, or with each well-informed interpretive translation. Arberry not only chose an interesting and representative sample of Rumi's ghazals, but also explained many obscure passages in the Persian that have baffled other readers. It seems fitting that his influential translations of 400 of Rumi's ghazals now be presented in this consistent and corrected format.

Franklin D. Lewis
University of Chicago, 2008

12. There are some archaicisms in Arberry's English; for example, he uniformly translated the word *khumār* as the now very obsolete "crop-sickness." This should be understood as hangover, or the more technical crapulence. In a very few places, Arberry's interpretation might be questioned. However, his wording has not been changed, except that an occasional addition has been made to the notes, to suggest an alternative reading to the one he has adopted. Words appearing in pointed brackets { } indicate additions which I have made to the published text of Arberry's *Mystical Poems of Rumi* after consulting the original Persian.

Foreword

TO VOLUME 2,
Mystical Poems of Rumi

In 1963, I suggested to the late Professor Arberry that he undertake the translation of a representative selection of Rūmī's lyrics from the *Dīvān-i Shams*, to be published in the Persian Heritage Series. Rūmī's *Dīvān*, despite its somewhat uneven texture, contains some of the most inspiring poems written in the Persian language and has certainly not been surpassed in the sheer depth and exuberance of feeling by the work of any other Persian poet. And yet the *Dīvān* had remained largely untranslated into English. R. A. Nicholson's *Selected Poems from the Dīvāni Shamsi Tabrizi* (Cambridge University Press, 1898), which contained the translation of forty-eight lyrics, was the most extensive work to represent the *Dīvān* in English.

Professor Arberry, with his exemplary knowledge of Persian literature, his vast experience in translating literary works, and his personal affinities with mystical thought of the poet, was the outstanding choice for the handling of this most difficult task. Rūmī, although easy to enjoy in Persian, is far from easy to

translate. Much of the appeal of his poetry depends on the musicality of his verse, which is bound to be lost in translation. The force of his passion and the subtlety of his mystical sentiments, expressed in a somewhat unorthodox diction, is also a constant challenge to the translator.

Professor Arberry's translation of the first two hundred poems was ready in 1965 and was published jointly by Allen and Unwin and the University of Chicago Press in 1968 under the title of *Mystical Poems of Rūmī, I*.¹

After the publication of the first volume, Professor Arberry, afflicted with failing health, nevertheless was able to complete, though with great difficulty, the preparation of the present volume, which contains translations of another two hundred poems. His untimely death in 1969, which dealt a serious blow to Persian and Arabic studies, came before he was able to send me his manuscript and it was only through the diligence and kindness of his daughter that the manuscript was located and placed at my disposal.

The reading of Professor Arberry's once fine and legible handwriting, however, proved a major task. Fortunately Dr. Hasan Javadi, a former and loyal student of his and now Professor and Chairman of the English Department at the University of Tehran, kindly agreed to prepare the manuscript for typing, collate it with the original, and also annotate the translation, following the pattern set by Professor Arberry in the first volume. Without his dedicated assistance the publication of this volume could not have been accomplished.

This volume is prefaced by what is perhaps the most intimate writing of Professor Arberry on his training, his spiritual journey, and his intellectual outlook. It throws light on the inner thought and sentiments of a distinguished humanist and scholar.

1. A paperback edition of the same was published by the University of Chicago Press in 1972.

It is my pleasant task to thank Mr. M. Kasheff and Dr. D. Bishop of Columbia University, and Professor Gh. Youssefi of the University of Mashhad for their assistance in resolving some of the ambiguous points in the translation. The editors, however, have not allowed themselves, except in a few necessary cases, to alter the text of the translation, which remains basically the same as left by the translator.

It is hoped that the two volumes, now made available, will prove of assistance to the students of Rūmī and an incentive to them for a complete translation of his *Dīvān*.

Ehsan Yarshater

Columbia University, 1978

An Autobiographical sketch

BY THE LATE PROFESSOR A. J. ARBERRY*

I was born the child of Victorian parents, strict believers of the Christian evangelical school. My early religious education was therefore of the same pattern: family prayers, church three times every Sunday, a severe puritanical attitude to pleasure, especially on the Lord's Day. My parents were virtuous and, according to their lights, deeply sincere in their conformity; they were poor, but being industrious and thrifty they spared their children the full rigors of poverty only too prevalent in England at the beginning of the present century. They were also ambitious for their children, determined that they should benefit to the full from the rapidly improving educational opportunities of those times. I attended elementary school from the age of three, won a scholarship to the local grammar school, and from there proceeded in due course to Cambridge. My education had cost my parents only the expense of feeding and clothing me; but that

*This *Apologia Spiritualis* was found among Professor Arberry's papers.

was a sufficiently large sacrifice to the poor of their generation, and I cannot adequately express my thankfulness to them for their love and devotion and unflinching encouragement.

When the first war broke out I was nine years old: my father served in the Royal Navy, and saw his brother's ship go down with all hands at the Battle of Jutland. The years 1914–18 were terribly anxious years for naval families; they were also fearful years for children as the technique for bombing civilians advanced, but they were incomparably easier than the years 1939–45 in which my own child grew up. The early 1920s were a time of disillusionment and doubt. For us in Britain the war had been won, but the peace was obviously lost: many thousands of heroes returned to unemployment; the poor became poorer still. These were the years in which, along with perhaps the majority of my contemporaries, I lost faith—the faith, that is, which I had been taught by my parents. Being what is called a clever boy, I read voraciously the rationalists, the agnostics, the atheists; I was persuaded that the mind was the measure of all things; I applied my reason to the dogmas of Christianity, and my reason rejected them. Having at one time seriously thought of the priesthood, I now abandoned worship entirely and resolved to become an academic scholar, abstract truth being the only altar before which I would kneel.

By a paradox which would have delighted Shaw whose writings had done so much to destroy my childhood beliefs, it was this resolution which ultimately led to the restoration of my faith. I graduated in classics, and then, disappointed at the narrow field of research offered by those ancient studies, I decided in a hasty moment to become an orientalist and chose for my particular course Arabic and Persian. I suppose it amused the unbeliever in me that I would henceforward be devoting my mind to a critical examination of Islam, no doubt as fallacious as Christianity. It certainly never occurred to me that that examination would have the effect of bringing me back to a belief in God.

In 1926, while still an undergraduate, I had attended the funeral of Edward Granville Browne. It was a studentship estab-

lished under his will that enabled me in 1927 to embark on my new studies. My teachers were Anthony Ashley Bevan, a Victorian agnostic who was a splendid philologist and a most kindly man, and Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, the eminent authority on Islamic mysticism. My encounter with Nicholson was the turning point in my life. He was at that time engaged on his last and greatest work, the editing and translating of the *Masnavi* of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī; and when I was ready to undertake research in Arabic and Persian, he persuaded me to follow in his footsteps and to explore the rich literature of the Sufis. My first labor was to edit and translate the *Mavāqif* of al-Niffārī, and this led to my first journey to the East and three years' residence in the lands of Islam. In those years I married and became a father.

Nicholson was a very shy and retiring man, painfully diffident—a scholar of the study who never traveled out of Europe, yet he achieved a deeper penetration of the mind and spirit of Islam than any other man I have ever known. He rarely spoke of his personal beliefs, and in twenty-five years of close friendship I learned little of his own spiritual formation. But the impression I gained was that he too had lost his faith as a young man, and had regained it through his intellectual communion with the mystics of Islam. In his old age he composed a poem in which he revealed for the first time his inner thoughts. These thoughts had obviously been profoundly influenced by his long studies of Rūmī.

Deep in our hearts the Light of Heaven is shining
 Upon a soundless Sea without a shore.
 Oh, happy they who found it in resigning
 The images of all that men adore.
 Blind eyes, to dote on shadows of things fair
 Only at last to curse their fatal lure,
 Like Harut and Marut, that Angel-pair
 Who deemed themselves the purest of the pure.
 Our ignorance and self-will and vicious pride
 Destroy the harmony of part and whole.

In vain we seek with lusts unmortified
 A vision of the One Eternal Soul.
 Love, Love alone can kill what seemed so dead,
 The frozen snake of passion. Love alone,
 By tearful prayer and fiery longing fed,
 Reveals a knowledge schools have never known.
 God's lovers learn from Him the secret ways
 Of Providence, the universal plan.
 Living in Him, they ever sing His praise
 Who made the myriad worlds of Time for Man.
 Evil they knew not, for in Him there's none;
 Yet without evil how should good be seen?
 Love answers: "Feel with me, with me be one;
 Where I am nought stands up to come between."
 There are degrees of heavenly light in souls;
 Prophets and Saints have shown the path they trod,
 Its starting points and stages, halts and goals,
 All leading to the single end in God.
 Love will not let his faithful servants tire,
 Immortal Beauty draws them on and on
 From glory unto glory drawing nigher
 At each remove and loving to be drawn.
 When Truth shines out words fail and nothing tell;
 Now hear the Voice within your hearts. Farewell.

I have spoken at this length of my old friend, whom I saw
 last very shortly before his death in 1945, because I am con-
 scious of a debt to Nicholson which I can never hope to re-
 pay. He was the perfect scholar, so devoted to his books that he
 blinded himself by reading, so modest and humble that he was
 totally unaware of his greatness. It was an old man with failing
 sight who penned these lines which for me contain the surest
 revelations and the most moving of last men's eyes:

When Truth shines out words fail and nothing tell;
 Now hear the Voice within your hearts. Farewell.

It was of that serene vision of Truth that al-Ḥallāj, the great
 Muslim mystic, spoke shortly before his crucifixion in 922:

Now stands no more between the Truth and me
Or reasoned demonstration,
Or proof or revelation;
Now, brightly blazing full, Truth's luminary,
That drives out of sight
Each flickering, lesser light.

“What is Truth?” asked jesting Pilate of the Man whom he would presently give on a like Cross, the Man who said, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.” I have said earlier that as a young man, having abandoned formal worship, I resolved to become an academic scholar, abstract truth being the only altar before which I would kneel. In those days I supposed truth to be a thing intellectually attainable, a quest for reason, far removed from the emotions. But the mystical affinity of truth with light was evidently already apprehended by Sir William Jones, that greatest of British orientalists who died in 1794 and whose example has always been my chief inspiration. Jones wrote:

Before thy mystic altar, heavenly Truth,
I kneel in manhood, as I knelt in youth.
There let me kneel, till this dull form decay,
And life's last shade be brightened by thy day;
Then shall my soul, now lost in clouds below,
Without consuming glow.

Truth, then, is Light—a light that shines into the heart. And what is light? The answer seems to be given in that sublime verse of the Koran:

God is the light of the heavens and the earth;
the likeness of His Light is as a niche
wherein is a lamp
(the lamp in a glass,
the glass as it were a glittering star)
kindled by a Blessed Tree,

an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West
whose oil well-nigh would shine, even if no fire touched it.
Light upon Light,
God guides to His Light whom He will.

Once this light has shone into the heart, no darkness can ever overcome it. I believe that light to be a reality, because I have myself experienced it. I believe it also to be the Truth, and I think it not inappropriate to call it God. I am an academic scholar, but I have come to realize that pure reason is unqualified to penetrate the mystery of God's light, and may, indeed, if too fondly indulged, interpose an impenetrable veil between the heart and God. The world in which we live is certainly full of shadows. I have had my full share of personal sorrows and anxieties, and I am as acutely aware as the next man of the appalling dangers threatening mankind. But because I have experienced the Divine Light, I need not wish for any higher grace.

I have now for some years resumed my Christian worship, in which I find great comfort, being no longer troubled by the intellectual doubts generated by too great a concern for dogma. I know that Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Parsi—all sorts and conditions of men—have been, are and will always be irradiated by that Light “kindled by a Blessed Tree, an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West”—the universal tree of the Truth and Goodness of God. For God, being the One Universal, has an infinite solicitude and love of each particular, and suffers His Light to shine into every human heart open to receive it.

Introduction

TO VOLUME I,
Mystical Poems of Rumi

Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, author of a vast collection of Persian odes and lyrics, of which a selection is here offered in translation, was born in A.D. 1207 at Balkh, which now lies within the frontiers of Afghanistan, and died in 1273 at Konya, in Asiatic Turkey. For an account of his life and times, the reader is invited to peruse the preface to my version of Rūmī's *Fīhi mā fīhi*, published by John Murray in 1961 under the title *Discourses of Rumi*; there is nothing I wish to add to what is written there, except by way of stressing the curious circumstances which attended Rūmī's transformation from sober theologian and preacher into ecstatic dancer and enraptured poet.

Rūmī's father, Bahā' al-Dīn Valad, had attained eminence in religious circles in Khorasan before his headlong flight to Saljūq Turkey on the eve of the Mongol invasions; in Konya, where he died in 1230, he enjoyed royal patronage and popular esteem as preacher and teacher. From 1240 to 1244, having completed his long formal education in Aleppo and Damascus, Rūmī in his

own turn taught and preached in Konya. Then, in 1244, when Rūmī was already thirty-seven years of age and seemingly set in his ways as a conventional mullah, a wandering dervish named Shams al-Dīn, a native of Tabriz apparently of artisan origin, suddenly arrived in the Saljūq capital and attracted attention by the wildness of his demeanour.

“Jalāl al-Dīn,” wrote R. A. Nicholson in his *Rumi, Poet and Mystic*,¹³ “found in the stranger that perfect image of the Divine Beloved which he had long been seeking. He took him away to his house, and for a year or two they remained inseparable. Sultān Valad (Rūmī’s son and biographer) likens his father’s all-absorbing communion with this ‘hidden saint’ to the celebrated journey of Moses in company with Khādir (Koran, XVIII 64–80), the sage whom Sufis regard as the supreme hierophant and guide of travellers on the Way to God. Rūmī’s pupils resented their teacher’s preoccupation with the eccentric stranger, and vilified and intrigued against him until Shams al-Dīn fled to Damascus. Rūmī sent his son to bring him back; but the tongues of his jealous traducers soon wagged again, and presently, perhaps in 1247, the man of mystery vanished without leaving a trace behind.”

The intense excitement of these adventures transformed Jalāl al-Dīn from the sober divine into an ecstatic wholly incapable of controlling the torrent of poetry which now poured forth from him. To symbolize, it is said, the search for the lost Beloved, now identified with Shams al-Dīn, he invented the famous whirling and circling dance of his Mevlevi dervishes, performed to the accompaniment of the lamenting reed pipe and the pacing drum. Night was turned into day in the long mystical orgy, and from time to time under the impact of the passionate moment Jalāl al-Dīn uttered extempore brief quatrains or extended lyrics, which his disciples hastily transcribed and committed to memory. To confess the human source of his inspiration, he very often introduced into his lyrics the name of Shams al-Dīn;

13. *Rūmī, Poet and Mystic* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1950), 19.

later he similarly commemorated Shams al-Dīn's successor in his spiritual affection, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Zarkūb. At other times Rūmī signed his verses with the soubriquet Khāmūsh, the Silent, a reference to the ineffable nature of the mysteries.

Though no manuscript copy of these poems has survived which had been compiled during Rūmī's lifetime, it is certain (as the learned editor Professor Badī' al-Zamān Furūzānfar has pointed out) that such a collection was made, and was available to the scribe of one of the existing codices, dated 723/1323. Nor is this all; it is equally certain that the copyist of another, undated but very ancient, codex had access to material in the autograph of Rūmī himself. Fortunately, several manuscripts have been preserved dating from within fifty years or so from the poet's death, and these have all been collated to serve as a very solid basis for Professor Furūzānfar's edition.¹⁴ The total output, excluding stanza-poems, quatrains, and other minor pieces, amounts to 3,229 separate odes, in 34,662 couplets. In the course of making the present versions, I have collated once more with the printed text the magnificent Chester Beatty codex, used by the editor in a microfilm which I caused to be made for him; I have noted numerous places where the readings of this codex, sometimes superior to the printed text, have been overlooked by the editor.

The Chester Beatty codex, besides being close to the poet's lifetime and on the whole very correct, exhibits a unique feature to which attention may be once more drawn. The Persian ode (Qaṣīda), like its shorter derivative the lyric (Ghazal), was composed in monorhyme, each couplet terminating in the same vowel+consonant as that chosen to end the opening line. The poet was free to choose between some dozen or so metres, but having made his choice he was required to keep strictly to it throughout the length of the individual composition. Medieval editors and copyists, when they came to publish the collected works (dīvān) of a poet, arranged the pieces not

14. *Kulliyāt-i Shams*. 8 vols. (Tehran, 1336-45/1957-66).

chronologically, nor according to style or subject, but alphabetically according to rhyme, ignoring differences of metre. Now in the Chester Beatty manuscript of Rūmī's *Divān*, the poems have been arranged group by group according to metre; then, within each group, alphabetically by rhyme. Moreover, the opening couplet of each separate poem has been inscribed in red ink, to facilitate speedy identification. The resulting impression is of a gigantic hymnbook; and this indeed may well have been the intention. When it is remembered that these poems were originally composed, and were thereafter chanted, as accompaniment to the sacred dance of the Mevlevi dervishes, it does not seem too fantastic to conclude that the Chester Beatty codex, which once belonged to a Mevlevi monastery in Cairo, was compiled after this fashion as a service book, to help the cantor to choose speedily the poem appropriate in rhythm to the particular phase of the dance.

Rūmī was by no means the first Persian to compose mystical poetry.¹⁵ He had not a few predecessors (and they had predecessors who wrote in Arabic) who gradually established conventions of language, imagery and rhetoric. The most eminent and influential of these pioneers were Sanā'ī, who died *circa* A.D. 1150, and Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār, whom Rūmī met in his youth.

Attar was the spirit,
Sana'i his eyes twain,
And in time thereafter
Came we in their train.

So Rūmī acknowledged his debt to these great masters, each of whom left behind a large quantity of mystical odes, as well as didactic, epic verse. But he did not confine his reading and

15. For a brief account of the history of Persian mystical poetry prior to Rūmī, see my *Muslim Saints and Mystics* (the first volume in the Persian Heritage Series, Chicago and London, 1966), pp. 5-11. It is hoped to go into more detail in the introduction to a second volume of translations of Rūmī's poems, now being prepared.

admiration to the mystical poets. We know, for instance, that he particularly appreciated the work of the great Arab heroic poet al-Mutanabbī (d. A.D. 955), from whom he quotes in his *Discourses*, as also occasionally in his *Dīvān*. His many nature-poems, especially those on the glories of spring, recall many models amongst the secular Arab and Persian poets. From these and other clues we are able to build up a picture of a man deeply immersed in the poetic traditions of Islam. Yet poetry was very far from being the centre of Rūmī's life; before everything he was a learned theologian after the finest pattern of medieval Islam, very familiar with the Koran and its exegesis, the traditional sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, the sacred law and its erudite expositors, the wranglings of the "Two-and-Seventy jarring sects," not to mention the "foreign sciences" including philosophy, and the lives and dicta of the saints and mystics. All this various learning is reflected in Rūmī's poetry; and it is this fact, coupled with abstruseness of thought and exotic convention of expression, that stands in the way of easy understanding and ready appreciation.

Whereas the interpreter of the *Mathnavī*, Rūmī's massive epic poem on the mystical life, can have recourse to a number of medieval commentaries to assist him in his task, no such aid is available to the student of the *Dīvān*. On the other hand we are very fortunate in possessing R. A. Nicholson's magnificent eight-volume edition, translation, and commentary of the *Mathnavī*, as well as his remarkable primitias, the *Selected Poems from the Dīvāni Shamsi Tabriz*, with its astonishingly mature and luminous introduction, together with his many other writings on Islamic mysticism, and the precious memory of his personal teaching. (The *Selected Poems* contains only forty-eight pieces, and even so includes a number of poems not found in the oldest manuscripts, and therefore of very doubtful authenticity.) We can also draw upon the erudite writings of Professor Furūzānfar, who has dedicated a lifetime of arduous and unremitting labour to the study of Rūmī. From the medieval period we can rely, albeit cautiously, on the *Manāqib al-ʿarīfin* of

Shams al-Dīn Aflākī, completed in 1353, a hagiography of Rūmī and his circle which purports to give the circumstances under which a number of the poems were composed. We are also grateful to have Rūmī's "table-talk" in the *Fīhi mā fīhi*, probably compiled by his son Sulṭān Valad, in the excellent edition of Professor Furūzānfār. Finally, I have had the good fortune to read all the poems chosen for translation with my learned friend and colleague Dr. Ḥasan Javādī-Tabrīzī, who has made numerous corrections and suggestions for the improvement of this interpretation.

These versions, being in the vast majority the first renderings into a western language (and the modern Turkish translation has been fully consulted), and intended primarily for non-specialists, have been made as literal as possible, with a minimal concession to readability. Short notes have been appended, to clarify obscurities and to explain unfamiliar allusions. For the rest, the reader is earnestly advised to make himself familiar with the *Matnnavī* in Nicholson's translation, and with the *Fīhi mā fīhi* in my own *Discourses of Rumi*. The poet is always consistent in his thought, and often repetitive in his expression, so that all his writings shed an abundance of mutually clarifying light. When all is said and done, however, it must be admitted that a number of passages in these poems still baffle the understanding, which is hardly surprising, considering the occasional nature of some of the references (for these poems were the spontaneous utterances of an ecstatic, unpremeditated and unrevised). There is also the further difficulty, that the language of the poems, though of course greatly influenced by literary style, is basically colloquial. It incorporates many Khorasanian idioms, affected by long residence in Arabic-speaking and Turkish-speaking lands, all from seven hundred years ago, so that the colloquial usages of the present day are not always a reliable guide. Rūmī himself appears to have been conscious of the elusive, evanescent nature of his utterances, as when he says (in poem 125 of this selection), "My verse resembles the bread of Egypt—night passes over it, and you cannot eat it any more."

Rūmī affected an astonishing contempt for his own poetry. On one occasion he remarked, "I am affectionate to such a degree that when these friends come to me, for fear that they may be wearied I speak poetry so that they may be occupied with that. Otherwise, what have I to do with poetry? By Allah, I care nothing for poetry, and there is nothing worse in my eyes than that. It has become incumbent upon me, as when a man plunges his hands into tripe and washes it out for the sake of a guest's appetite, because the guest's appetite is for tripe." The poet's modesty, rooted in a puritanical scrupulosity, does not need to affect our judgment. In Rūmī we encounter one of the world's greatest poets. In profundity of thought, inventiveness of image, and triumphant mastery of language, he stands out as the supreme genius of Islamic mysticism. He invites and deserves the most attentive and intensive study, by a succession of devoted scholars, whose combined explorations will vastly improve upon our first halting attempt. Future generations, as his poetry becomes wider known and more perfectly understood, will enjoy and applaud with increasing insight and enthusiasm the poems of this wisest, most penetrating, and saintliest of men.

The poems that follow are not a continuous cycle, but a careful selection from the first 1,500 odes and lyrics. They thus represent a planned selection, my purpose being to include poems of various styles and degrees of difficulty. The numbering 1-200 is my own, but in the notes I have in every case given the reference to the corresponding number in the Tehran edition.

Mystical Poems
of Rumi

I

What excuses have you to offer, my heart, for so many shortcomings? Such constancy on the part of the Beloved, such unfaithfulness on your own!

So much generosity on his side, on yours such niggling contrariness! So many graces from him, so many faults committed by you!

Such envy, such evil imaginings and dark thoughts in your heart, such drawing, such tasting, such munificence by him!

Why all this tasting? That your bitter soul may become sweet. Why all this drawing? That you may join the company of the saints.

5 You are repentant of your sins, you have the name of God on your lips; in that moment he draws you on, so that he may deliver you alive.

You are fearful at last of your wrongdoings, you seek desperately a way to salvation; in that instant why do you not see by your side him who is putting such fear into your heart?

If he has bound up your eyes, you are like a pebble in his hand; now he rolls you along like this, now he tosses you in the air.

Now he implants in your nature a passion for silver and gold and women; now he implants in your soul the light of the form of Muṣṭafā.

On this side drawing you towards the lovely ones, on that side drawing you to the unlovely; amid these whirlpools the ship can only pass through or founder.

10 Offer up so many prayers, weep so sorely in the night season, that the echo may reach your ears from the sphere of the seven heavens.

When Shu‘aib’s groaning and lamentation and tears like hailstones passed beyond all bounds, in the morning a proclamation came to him from heaven:

“If you are a sinner, I have forgiven you and granted you pardon for your sins. Is it paradise you seek? Lo, I have given it to you; be silent, cease these petitions!”

Shu‘aib retorted, “I seek neither this nor that. What I desire is to see God face to face; though the seven seas all turn to fire, I will plunge therein if only I may encounter Him.

But if I am banished from that spectacle, if my tear-stained eyes are shut against that vision, I am more fit to dwell in hell-fire; paradise becomes me not.

15 Without His countenance, paradise for me is hateful hell. I am consumed by this hue and scent of mortality; where is the splendour of the lights of immortality?”

They said, “At least moderate your weeping, lest your sight be diminished, for the eye becomes blind when weeping passes beyond bounds.”

He said, “If my two eyes in the end should be seeing after that fashion, every part of me will become an eye: why then should I grieve over blindness?”

But if in the end this eye of mine should be deprived forever, let that sight indeed become blind which is unworthy to behold the Beloved!”

In this world, every man would become a ransom for his beloved; one man's beloved is a bag of blood, another's the sun in splendour.

20 Since every man has chosen a beloved, good or bad, as suits his own nature, it would be a pity if we should annihilate ourselves for the sake of nothing!

One day a traveller was accompanying Bā Yazīd on a certain road. Presently Bā Yazīd said to him, "What trade have you chosen, you rogue?"

The man replied, "I am an ass-driver." Bā Yazīd exclaimed, "Be gone from me!—Lord, grant that his ass may die, that he may become the slave of God!"

2

O lovers, lovers, this day you and we are fallen into a whirlpool: who knows how to swim?

Though the world's torrent should overflow and every wave become like a dromedary, why shall the waterfowl worry? It is the bird of the air that should be anxious.

Our faces are lighted up with gratitude, schooled as we are in wave and sea, inasmuch as ocean and flood are life-increasing to the fish.

Elder, hand us a towel; water, let us plunge into you; Moses son of 'Imrān, come, smite the water of the sea with your staff!

5 This wind concocts in every head a different passion; let my passion be for yonder cupbearer, and you may have all the rest!

Yesterday yon saki on the way snatched the caps of the drunkards; today he is giving yet more wine, preparing to strip us of our robes.

O envy of the Moon and of Jupiter, with us, yet hidden from sight like a peri, gently, gently you are drawing me on—will you not say whither?

Wherever you go, you are with me still, you who are my eyes and my brightness; if you will, draw me to drunkenness,

if you will, transport me to annihilation.

Know that the world is like Mount Sinai, and we like Moses are seekers; every moment an epiphany arrives and cleaves the mountain asunder.

10 One portion becomes green, one portion becomes narcissus-white; one portion becomes a pearl, one portion ruby and amber.

You who seek to behold Him, gaze upon this mountainchain of His. O mountain, what wind has blown upon you? We have become intoxicated with the echo.

O gardener, gardener, why have you come to grapple with us? If we have carried off your grapes, you have carried off our purse!

3

Today I beheld the beloved, that ornament of every affair; he went off departing to heaven like the spirit of Muṣṭafā.

The sun is put to shame by his countenance, heaven's sphere is as confused as the heart; through his glow, water and clay are more resplendent than fire.

I said, "Show me the ladder, that I may mount up to heaven." He said, "Your head is the ladder; bring your head down under your feet."

When you place your feet on your head, you will place your feet on the head of the stars; when you cleave through the air, set your foot on the air, so, and come!

5 A hundred ways to heaven's air become manifest to you; you go flying up to heaven every dawning like a prayer.

4

Every instant a revelation from heaven comes to men's innermost souls: "How long like dregs do you remain upon earth? Come up!"

Whoever is heavy of soul in the end proves to be dregs; only then does he mount to the top of the vat when his dregs are clarified.

Do not stir the clay every moment, so that your water may become clear, so that your dregs may be illumined, so that your pains may be cured.

It is spiritual, like a torch, only its smoke is greater than its light; when its smoke passes beyond bounds, it no longer displays radiance in the house.

5 If you diminish the smoke, you will enjoy the light of the torch; both this abode and that will become illumined by your light.

If you look into muddy water, you see neither the moon nor the sky; sun and moon both disappear when darkness possesses the air.

A northern breeze is blowing, through which the air becomes clarified; it is for the sake of this burnishing that at dawn the zephyr breathes.

The spiritual breeze burnishes the breast of all sorrow; let the breath be stopped but for a moment, and annihilation will come upon the spirit.

The soul, a stranger in the world, is yearning for the city of placelessness; why, O why does the bestial spirit continue so long to graze?

10 Pure, goodly soul, how long will you journey on? You are the King's falcon; fly back toward the Emperor's whistle!

5

O lovers, lovers, the time of union and encounter has come. The proclamation from heaven has come: “Moon-faced beauties, welcome hither!”

Joyous hearts, joyous hearts, joy has come skirt a-trailing; we have seized its chain, it has seized our skirts.

The fiery potion has come; demon sorrow, sit in a corner; death-anxious soul, depart; immortal saki, enter in!

The seven spheres of heaven are drunk with passion for you; we are as counters in your hand; our being through your being is a myriad times at ease.

5 Sweet-breathed minstrel, every instant shake the bell; O gladness, saddle your steed; O zephyr, blow upon our souls!

O sound of the sweet-conversing reed, in your note is the taste of sugar; your note brings me night and morning the scent of fidelity.

Make beginning again, play those airs once more; O sun lovely of presence, glory over all the lovely ones!

Be silent, do not rend the veil; drain the flagon of the silent ones; be a veiler, be a veiler, habituate yourself to the clemency of God.

6

How sweet it is to give speech and head, to converse with his lip, especially when he opens the door and says, “Good sir, come in!”

To the dry lip he tells the story of the fountain of Khidar; according to the stature of the man the tailor of his love cuts the gown.

The fountains become drunken through the intoxication of his eye; the trees are dancing before the gentle breeze of dawn.

The nightingale says to the rosebush, “What is in your

heart? Declare it this instant. No other is near; only you and I.”

5 The rosebush answers, “So long as you are with yourself, entertain not this ambition. Make a special effort to transport the burden of your selfhood out of this earthly abode.”

The eye of the needle of passion is narrow; know for a certainty that it will not admit any thread when it perceives it to be of double strand.

Behold how the sun is up to the throat in fire, so that through its face the face of the earth may become full of light.

When Moses proceeded towards the burning bush, the bush said, “I am the water of Kauthar; take off your shoes, and come!

Do not fear my fire, for I am water and sweet at that; you have come to prosperity; the seat of honour is yours, welcome!

10 You are a pearl of pure lustre, a ruby of the mine, the soul of place and placelessness; you are the nonpareil of the age; where are other creatures beside you?”

Through love’s hand, every hand becomes the royal court of munificence; through you, the faithless world becomes the factory of fidelity.

At the first hour of day you came, in your hand the royal bowl; you are drawing my soul towards the feast, saying, “Welcome!”

What becomes of the heart, when the heart’s hand grasps the hand of a sweetheart? What becomes of the dross copper, when it hears the welcoming voice of the philosopher’s stone?

A wondrous darling came, in his hand a lance, like a bedouin.

I said, “What service can I render?” He said, “Come up to me!”

15 My heart leaped, saying, “Shall I run?” My reason said, “Shall I go?” Generously he signaled, saying, “Yes, both of you!”

Since the table has come down from heaven, wash your hands and your mouth too, that there may not proceed from your palms the odour of onions and chives.

The mine of salt has arrived; take heed, if you are goodly and a lover. Seize the bowl, and give the cup; choose riot, not broth!

Now I close these two lips, so that the lamp of day and night even with the flame of the tongue may tell you the whole story.